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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON RULES

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, February 10, 2009
10:15 a.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY, VICE-CHAIR

11

COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE

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COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.

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COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN

14

COUNCILMAN WILLIAM GREENLEE

15

COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

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BILL 080901 - An ordinance continuing the
Chestnut Hill Business Improvement District
beyond the date of termination...

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BILL 080952 - An ordinance amending Chapter
14-1800 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
"Zoning Board of Adjustment," to prohibit
accessory uses in connection with a principal
use authorized by variance...

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Litigation Support Services
Eleven Penn Center
1835 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
215.561.2220 215.567.2670

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COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good

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morning, ladies and gentlemen. The

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Committee on Rules is now in session.

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We have a quorum, with

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Vice-Chair Councilman Kenney, Councilman

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Clarke, Councilman Greenlee,

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Councilperson Miller and Councilman

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Goode.

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I want to make an announcement

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that Bill No. 080952 will be recessed

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until February 24th at 10:00 a.m. So if

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there's anybody here to testify on Bill

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No. 080952, you should take note of that

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and be back on the 24th.

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The bill we will hear is Bill

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No. 080901, which is an ordinance

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continuing the Chestnut Hill Business

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Improvement District beyond the date of

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termination of the district in the area

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that generally includes both sides of

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Germantown Avenue from 7640 to 8705, both

23

sides of Bethlehem Pike from 10 to 105

24

and certain blocks of streets that

25

intersect that portion of Germantown

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2 Avenue, and for which Chestnut Hill
3 Business Improvement District, Inc., a
4 Pennsylvania non-profit corporation,
5 serves as the neighborhood improvement
6 district.

7 Is there anyone to testify on
8 this bill?

9 (Witness approached witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please
12 identify yourself for the record.

13 MR. FRISHKOFF: Good morning,
14 Mr. Chair and members of City Council.
15 My name is Andrew Frishkoff and I am the
16 Director of Neighborhood Economic
17 Development for the City of
18 Philadelphia's Commerce Department. I am
19 here today to provide testimony in
20 support of Bill No. 080901. This bill
21 will allow for the re-establishment of
22 the Chestnut Hill Business Improvement
23 District.

24 The creation of business
25 improvement districts, or BIDs as they

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2 are often known, is consistent with the
3 City's Strategic Plan, especially with
4 the core service areas of Jobs and
5 Economic Development, and Healthy and
6 Sustainable Communities. BIDs strengthen
7 local business and residential
8 communities through cleaning,
9 beautification, public safety and
10 marketing activities.

11 BIDs are also consistent with
12 the goals of our ReStore Philadelphia
13 Corridors program, designed to help
14 re-establish neighborhood commercial
15 corridors as central places to work, shop
16 and meet neighbors. BIDs are one of the
17 best examples of collaboration between
18 the City and our neighborhood commercial
19 corridors. Like their counterparts in
20 other BIDs throughout the City, Chestnut
21 Hill businesses and property owners
22 recognize the need to improve the
23 environment within which they and their
24 customers live and work. Their
25 continuing efforts to make the Germantown

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2 Avenue business corridor clean, safe and
3 attractive helps ensure the stability of
4 the entire community.

5 In these difficult economic
6 times, efforts to keep this key
7 commercial center competitive and
8 successful are more important than ever.
9 Given the stresses imposed on
10 neighborhood retailers by the current
11 economy, we urge the District to continue
12 to deliver high-quality services at the
13 lowest possible cost to business and
14 property owners. The Commerce Department
15 is supportive of these proposed services
16 as long as they have the backing of the
17 affected businesses.

18 While I will be happy to answer
19 any questions you may have, I hope that
20 you will have the opportunity to hear
21 from businesspeople and community members
22 who have invested their time and energy
23 into developing the Chestnut Hill
24 Business Improvement District. They are
25 the local experts.

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2 Thank you for your time and
3 your consideration.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
5 for your testimony. There are no
6 questions for you, but who else is here
7 to testify on behalf of the bill?

8 (Witness approached witness
9 table.)

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good
11 morning. Please identify yourself.

12 MS. GREENBERG: Good morning.
13 My name is Bonnie Greenberg. I am a
14 property owner and the present Chair of
15 the Board of the Business Improvement
16 District of Chestnut Hill.

Over the past five years, the Chestnut Hill Business Improvement District has demonstrated its ability to maintain the strong business district we already have and proactively direct its future. However, with increased competition from a resurrected Plymouth Meeting Mall and the big box mecca of Chemical Road and the continued shifting

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2 of shopping patterns primarily due to the
3 Internet, merchants and property owners
4 cannot afford to be complaisant.

5 Furthermore, because of the
6 general downturn in the national economy,
7 the Chestnut Hill business community must
8 now, more than ever before, promote the
9 ambiance and charm of our main street to
10 attract shoppers, as well as provide
11 satisfactory levels of convenience and
12 security.

13 To this end, the Chestnut Hill
14 BID has devoted itself to the
15 maintenance, improvement, beautification
16 and safety of the Germantown Avenue
17 business corridor. With 100 percent of
18 our assessments collected and with
19 \$117,000 in grant monies and
20 approximately \$110,000 in contributions
21 in kind, the Chestnut Hill BID has, for
22 example, hired a full-time maintenance
23 employee who has collected more than
24 4,000 pounds of trash per year, above and
25 beyond the City's collection. He has

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2 also cared for our award-winning flower
3 baskets and barrels, which make Chestnut
4 Hill a true garden district.

5 The BID has financed the
6 repaving of three parking lots and the
7 installation of a mechanical arm at
8 another lot.

9 The BID has sponsored the
10 Cope-Linder Streetscape Study, which is
11 used as a guideline for improvements to
12 Germantown Avenue. As advocated by the
13 study, a pedestrian bump-out for the
14 corner of Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem
15 Pike has been designed and is now out to
16 bid. This project is being funded by a
17 grant awarded to the Chestnut Hill
18 Business Improvement District by the City
19 of Philadelphia's Commerce Department.

20 The BID has embarked on an
21 ambitious signage program. Designs for
22 parking lot signage were completed, and
23 wayfinding/informational kiosks are being
24 fabricated for three key areas in the
25 Business District.

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2 The BID organized and funded
3 the "Let's Get Lit" campaign. Working
4 with PECO, the Chestnut Hill Business
5 Improvement District has secured a
6 dedicated electrical source for the
7 District's important holiday display.

8 The BID organized and sponsored
9 AbZ00lutely Chestnut Hill 1 and 2. Zoo 1
10 in 2006 brought thousands of new visitors
11 to the Hill and raised \$78,000. Zoo 2
12 was installed this past September and
13 raised an additional \$20,000.

14 The BID has promoted the "Open
15 on Sundays" campaign. Today, Sunday is
16 the second busiest shopping day of the
17 week in Chestnut Hill, with 75 percent of
18 the stores open for business.

19 In the course of the past five
20 years, the Chestnut Hill BID has worked
21 very closely with other Chestnut Hill
22 organizations, such as the Chestnut Hill
23 Business Association, the Chestnut Hill
24 Parking Foundation and the Chestnut Hill
25 Garden District Fund.

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2 Dedicating our resources to
3 bricks and mortar projects has allowed
4 the Chestnut Hill Business Association,
5 for example, to devote its budget solely
6 to advertising and promotional
7 activities. The Chestnut Hill Business
8 Improvement District has forced a more
9 efficient division of labor among these
10 organizations in their contribution to
11 the vibrancy of the Germantown Avenue
12 corridor.

13 Working with the Business
14 Association, the Chestnut Hill BID has
15 made outreach to other Northwest
16 community organizations to promote the
17 historical, cultural and architectural
18 uniqueness of our area. Specifically, we
19 are investigating a project with Mount
20 Airy USA and the Mount Airy Business
21 Improvement District. The success of
22 this project may allow us to work jointly
23 for a form of "green" transportation
24 along Germantown Avenue for weekend
25 shoppers, diners and tourists. Such

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2 regional requests, we have been
3 repeatedly told, are more apt to receive
4 state and federal grant monies.

5 Other future projects would
6 include an ambitious campaign for new
7 streetlights and improved pedestrian
8 crosswalks. Our reauthorization would
9 enable us to continue our general
10 maintenance of Germantown Avenue. The
11 Chestnut Hill Business Improvement
12 District would like to have a more
13 symbiotic relationship with local
14 institutions, such as the Chestnut Hill
15 Health System, the Chestnut Hill College
16 and the Morris Arboretum, as their
17 customers should be our customers as
18 well.

19 None of this is possible
20 without a dedicated funding source, one
21 that also has the ability to attract
22 grants. Approximately one-half of our
23 budget, over \$90,000, comes from absentee
24 landlords and businesses that have a
25 record of contributing nothing towards

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2 the maintenance and beautification of the
3 Chestnut Hill Business Improvement
4 District. Without the Chestnut Hill BID,
5 Germantown Avenue's infrastructure would
6 erode, adversely affecting the
7 sustainability of our unique small
8 businesses. As one of Forbes' seven best
9 urban enclaves in the United States,
10 Chestnut Hill needs Germantown Avenue,
11 and Germantown Avenue needs the Chestnut
12 Hill Business Improvement District.

13 In closing, I would just like
14 to acknowledge the support of state
15 officials Cherelle Parker and LeAnn
16 Washington, and give a special thank-you
17 to Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller and her
18 staff for the continued assistance and
19 support.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you
22 very much.

23 Are there any questions from
24 the Committee for this witness?

25 (No response.)

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2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is there
3 anyone else to testify on the bill?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing
6 none, I want to thank you for your
7 voluntary financial contribution to that
8 effort and also for your volunteer
9 efforts on the part of the Board. So
10 thank you.

11 As part of the statutory
12 requirements of this process of
13 reauthorization, this is the first of two
14 hearings, and if there's no other
15 business or testimony, I would like to
16 recess the Bill 080901 and request a
17 recess to the call of the Chair.

18 Thank you for your attendance.

19 (Committee on Rules adjourned
20 at 10:25 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter on February 10, 2009, and
that this is a true and correct transcript of
same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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